(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether these agreements are being implemented presently; and

(d) what steps are being taken to ensure speedy release of fishermen caught by the maritime agencies of both the countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

(d) The matters regarding release of Indian fishermen in Pakistan and their boats are consistently taken up with Pakistan Government through diplomatic channels, both in Islamabad and New Delhi, and during high level contacts from time to time.

During the Foreign Secretary level talks held on December 27-28, 2004 at Islamabad it was agreed that immediate notification would be provided to the respective High Commissions through the Foreign Ministries of the arrested Indian/Pakistani nationals, consular access would be given to all the civilian prisoners (including fishermen) held in each other's country within three months from the date of their arrest and repatriation would be done immediately after completion of sentence and nationality verification.

During the visit of External Affairs Minister to Pakistan from February 15-17, 2005 and during the visit of President of Pakistan to India from April 16-18, 2005, the issue of early release and repatriation of all the Indian fishermen along with their boats was taken up.

Representations regarding detention of fourteen Indians

1934. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received representations regarding the detention of fourteen Indians in Pakistan who were employed on foreign fishing vessels;

(b) if so, the present status of these fourteen Indians;

(c) whether our High Commission in Pakistan has initiated steps to secure their release; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) They are still in Pakistani jail.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The officials of the High Commission of India, Islamabad have met these fourteen Indians during the consular access on July 16-18, 2005 along with other Indian fishermen and have confirmed their nationality to the Government of Pakistan. The High Commission is consistently taking up the matter of release of all the Indian fishermen with the Government of Pakistan through diplomatic channels.

Forged passports and visas

1935. SHRI E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is also a fact that a number of cases of forged passports and visa have come to light;

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government to check this trend; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Forgeries in passports and visas do come to the notice of the authorities from time to time.

(b) The Government has taken several steps to check the menace of forged travel documents. These include introduction of Machine Readable Passports (MRP), computerization of databases, installation of intelligent computer terminals at international airports, pre-induction and re-orientation training of immigration officials to detect forged travel documents.

Whenever instances of forged travel documents come to light, the Government, in consultation with Security Agencies, revokes such passports, and holders of such passports are placed in Prior Approval Category (PAC).

(c) Not applicable.